



Call for Proposals: GEAR UP! - Small Grants for Local Actions on Global Citizenship Education and Sustainable Development in Serbia and Montenegro

1. Introduction and background

This call for proposals for small grants distributed by [CROSOL](#) in Serbia and Montenegro is a part of the [GEAR UP! project](#), a European initiative aimed at strengthening global citizenship education (GCE) and sustainable development through local engagement. Funded under the DEAR Programme (Development Education and Awareness Raising) of the European Commission, the project supports civil society organisations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs) to implement actions that raise awareness and promote active citizenship, particularly among youth.

The GEAR UP project includes a sub-granting mechanism to provide financial support to third parties, primarily civil society organisations (CSOs) and / or Local Authorities (LAs) , in both EU and IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) countries. The objective is to enhance youth engagement, global citizenship education (GCE), and sustainable development efforts at the local level.

The action will be developed in Italy, Spain, Germany, France, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Croatia and Hungary, as well as in Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, through previously established co-operation and networking of co-applicants. For the IPA countries, CROSOL, which has ongoing partnerships with various CSOs and LAs networks active in the Western Balkans, will facilitate capacity building and sub-granting processes in **Serbia and Montenegro**.

[CROSOL – Croatian Platform for International Citizen Solidarity](#), as one of the consortium partners, is responsible for managing the financial support mechanism for beneficiaries in Serbia and Montenegro, ensuring that small and medium-sized CSOs and LAs—often lacking the resources to access direct EU funding—receive the necessary financial and capacity-building support. The grants will fund initiatives that address sustainable development goals (SDGs), environmental and social justice, gender equality, and civic participation. Special emphasis will be placed on fostering cooperation between CSOs and LAs to create long-term, community-based engagement on global challenges.



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2. Objectives and priorities

The GEAR UP! project aims to foster a shared European vision of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) as a key tool for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. It focuses on raising awareness, particularly among young people, about climate change, sustainable development, and gender equality, while promoting strong and lasting cooperation between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Local Authorities (LAs), whenever possible.

Specific objectives

Each funding proposal should address **one or more** specific objectives:

The project pursues three specific objectives:

- 1) Empower Local Authorities and/or Civil Society Organisations in **Serbia and Montenegro**** through financial support, enabling them to raise awareness of global challenges, strengthen understanding of local-global interdependencies, and actively participate in decision-making processes.
- 2) Build the capacities and networks of LAs and CSOs by enhancing skills, facilitating knowledge exchange, and providing resources for effective Global Citizenship Education at regional and European levels.**
- 3) Engage and educate young people (18-30 years old) in Serbia and Montenegro on sustainability and global challenges, through GCE initiatives led by LAs and/or CSOs.**

Priorities

Each proposal should address **one or more** priorities.

The thematic priorities of this call are:

1. sustainable development and SDGs
2. youth engagement
3. global citizenship education (with focus on civic engagement)
4. social or environmental justice
5. gender equality, non-discrimination principle and intersectionality
6. awareness and critical understanding of global issues



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7. global/local interdependencies (considering culture and international development cooperation)

3. Project Scope and Requirements

Possible types of activities funded by this Call

- awareness raising campaigns, training, seminars in the field of GCE, sustainable development, youth engagement/participation, gender equality;
- interactive and educational round tables / workshops;
- capacity building activities, public/cultural events (one-off, series or recurrent);
- cultural and artistic initiatives (co-financing of theatre performances, exhibitions);
- activities to promote correct and broad information and awareness on issues related to GCE and the UN 2030 Agenda;
- formal education activities to enhance GCE in teaching and school curricula;
- non-formal education initiatives to promote a change of perception and behaviour through participation and forms of active citizenship that foster the dissemination of GCE values;
- production and distribution of teaching and learning materials on the topic of GCE;

The main target group of the proposed activities should be young people aged 18 – 30.

Not admissible:

Activities that discriminate against persons and/or groups of persons based on gender, sexual orientation, belief, non-belief or (perceived) ethnic origin

or

Activities that directly support political parties or involve proselytism for religious purposes **will not be considered for funding under this Call.**

Funding limits: The GEAR UP! Call for Proposals invites applications from eligible civil society organisations (CSOs) and Local Authorities (LAs) in Serbia and Montenegro to submit proposals for financial support for projects promoting youth engagement, global citizenship education (GCE), and sustainable development. A total of €75,000 is available for funding in Serbia and Montenegro. Individual grants will range between €5,000 and €15,000. The awarded grant amount will cover 100% of the project budget.



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Number of projects to be supported: While we aim to award 5-7 grants/applications, the final number of funded projects will depend on the availability and distribution of funds among the selected subgrantees. The Selection Committee reserves the right not to allocate all the available funds if the quality of applications does not meet the required standards. In such cases, unallocated funds will be carried over to the budget of the subsequent funding cycle.

Number of applications: each applicant can submit a maximum of **one (1)** project proposal per call.

Project Duration: The GEAR UP! Call for Proposals supports projects ranging from a minimum of 6 months to a maximum of 12 months. All funded projects must be **implemented between September 2025 and August 2026**, ensuring that activities are completed within this timeframe. Applicants should propose realistic timelines that allow for effective implementation, monitoring, and reporting of project activities. The project duration should align with the proposed objectives, ensuring tangible impact and sustainable outcomes. Extensions beyond the specified timeframe will not be granted, and beneficiaries must adhere to the agreed-upon schedule to ensure compliance with funding requirements.

Reporting Requirements: It is important to note that this funding is provided under the European Union's funding framework, which entails rigorous reporting and results monitoring requirements. All subgrantees will need to submit periodic narrative reports on activities and results, along with supporting documents such as photos, outreach materials and other proof of evidence.

Language: the grant application (online form and content section), and any reports (Activity Report and Financial Report) and all the attachments are to be submitted in English (EN).

Visibility Requirements: All selected projects must adhere to the visibility and communication requirements by including the donor's logo in all publications, references, documents, news and any other visibility and communication action relating to the project.

Monitoring and evaluation: The grantee will commit to carry out project's monitoring and evaluation according to predefined instructions, with the support of the CROSOL Project Manager.

4. Eligibility Criteria



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To be eligible for funding under this Call for Proposals, applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

Eligible Entities

Applicants must:

- be a legal person (CSO or an association of CSOs) constituted in accordance with the legislation in force in the country (Serbia or Montenegro) or a small or medium-sized Local Authority based in Serbia or Montenegro
- be a consortium of Non-Profit Organisations and other Local Authorities with a clearly identified Lead Organization
- if a legal person, be a Civil Society Organization (CSO) or an association of CSOs constituted in accordance with the legislation in force in the country
- be non-profit making
- not be a beneficiary of a grant (neither lead, or co-applicant, or affiliated entity, nor associates or contractors) in the frame of the European Commission's DEAR programme
- have been legally registered for a minimum of 12 months before the publication date of this Call for Proposals.
- adhere to EU due diligence requirements, as listed in the Declaration on exclusion criteria

Note: Individual applicants (without formal partnerships) are eligible to apply under this Call for Proposals. However, formal and/or informal collaborations with other actors may be established for the purpose of implementing project activities.

Eligible Locations: The applicants must be based in Serbia or Montenegro and the activities must take place in their respective countries.

5. Application Process

Timeline

Application deadline: Project proposals must be submitted no later than **26 May 2025**. Late submissions will not be considered.

Notification of results: Successful applicants will be notified by **1 July 2025**.



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Implementation period: Funded projects must be carried out between **1 September 2025 and 31 August 2026**.

6. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

All applications will be assessed by an Evaluation Committee comprising representatives from CROSOL and, where applicable, external evaluators with no conflict of interest. The maximum score is 100 points.

Evaluation Area	Description	Max Points
1. Relevance of the Project	Alignment with the objectives and thematic priorities of this Call (e.g., sustainable development, GCE, youth engagement, gender equality).	20
2. Project Impact	Expected impact on the target groups and community, particularly young people. Includes multiplier effect, outreach, and sustainability of results. ¹	30
3. Reasons for the Project	Clarity of the problem or need being addressed, justification of the action, and responsiveness to local context.	20
4. Organisational and Professional Capacity	Capacity of the applicant to implement the proposed activities, including experience, staff qualifications, and financial and administrative capabilities.	20
5. Project Budget: Cost-Effectiveness	Budget clarity and appropriateness. Value for money and efficient use of resources.	10
Total		100

- In the case of a tie between two or more proposals with the same total score, preference will be given to the project with the highest score under the criterion "**Relevance of the Project.**" If a tie persists, priority will be determined based on the order in which the proposals were received.
- Projects that do not reach the minimum score of 60 points based on the evaluation criteria outlined in this Call for Proposals will be considered ineligible for funding.

¹ See Involvement pyramid, required level 3 and above:
https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/library/engagement-pyramid-2pager_en



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- CROSOL's Evaluation Committee will formally approve the final ranking list, indicating which projects are accepted or rejected, and will award grants to the selected beneficiaries.
- Successful applicants will be notified of the results by email.
- The ranking list of accepted and rejected proposals will also be published on CROSOL's dedicated [GEAR UP web page](#). Please note that unsuccessful applicants will not be contacted individually.

7. Further information

Grant Payment Schedule

CROSOL will disburse the grant in three instalments:

- 40% upon the signing of the grant agreement,
- 30% following the approval of the interim report, and
- 30% after the successful submission and approval of the final report.

Reporting and Payment Conditions

CROSOL will require a narrative and financial interim report at the midpoint of the project implementation, depending on the total project duration. The second payment will be made only after the interim report has been reviewed and approved.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Before the balance payment, a financial audit by the GearUP external auditor will be performed as a precondition for releasing the final payment. Beneficiaries will be responsible for providing all the necessary supporting documents to prove the costs declared, such as contracts, invoices and accounting records. In addition, the beneficiaries' usual accounting and internal control procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the amounts declared with the amounts recorded in their accounting statements and the amounts indicated in the supporting documents.

Questions related to the Call:

All questions related to this Call for Proposals can be sent to crosol@crosol.hr during the application period, **starting from 26 April 2025**. Potential applicants will receive a response within five (5) working days of receiving the inquiry. Questions will be accepted until **16 May 2025**.



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REQUIRED DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

Document	Format	Notes
Grant Application Form	Word (unsigned) + PDF (signed)	Fully completed and compliant with form requirements
Project Budget Form (Annex 4)	Excel (unsigned) + PDF (signed)	Budget must show: total funding (in EURO), requested CROSOL contribution, and compliance with financial limits
Declaration on Exclusion Criteria (Annex 1)	PDF (signed and scanned)	Mandatory
Action Plan (Annex 2)	PDF (signed)	Mandatory
Partnership Form (Annex 3)	PDF (signed and scanned)	Only if a formal partnership is established
Certified true copy of the organisation's Statute (for CSOs)	PDF (scanned)	Mandatory for CSOs

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